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TIME-ARTICULATION BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

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THE PROBLEM

Some years ago in an Iowa village, at a parents' meeting one evening, the charge was made by one of the patrons that the high-school course of study ministered altogether too much to the needs of "the few" who went to college. Said he: "Of last year's graduating class of ten, but two are in college." "Very true," replied the principal, "but I have certified to entrance credentials for eight of our graduates, all of whom entered college this year for the first time. Of every graduating class a goodly number enters college after an interval of one or more years." Recent studies in the vocational distribution of high-school graduates also have brought out the fact that it is not an uncommon thing for a high-school graduate to postpone his entrance to college one or more years and during the interval to engage in one or more gainful occupations.

In the present study of the time-interval between graduation from high school and entrance to college, it is purposed (*a*) to present the fact as regards fourteen hundred graduates of secondary schools of the year 1908 who have since entered four higher state schools in Iowa and Kansas, and (*b*) from the data at hand to make certain deductions.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The specific information sought was how many graduates of the classes of 1908 of four-year accredited secondary schools have entered college for the first time during each of the seven years since their graduation. An effort was made to secure these data from a half-dozen representative state schools, either through the registrars or by the co-operation of departments of education. Satisfactory data were secured from Iowa State Teachers College, Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, the State University of Iowa, and the University of Kansas—giving from the four schools a total of 1,407 students.

The following statements taken from the reports submitted by the Universities of Kansas and Iowa help to characterize the data from these institutions. "The information deals only with those high-school graduates who graduated in Kansas high schools in 1908 and entered college for the first time here at the University of Kansas." In the State University of Iowa, "care was taken to avoid repetitions due to the same student being enrolled in more than one college." Also, "the data include only original entries at the State University of Iowa," not including "those who entered Iowa after spending one or more years in other institutions."

In all correspondence it was emphasized that it was the "time-interval" between graduation from high school and "first entrance to college" that was being measured.

TABLE I
SHOWING ENTRANTS IN ALL SCHOOLS, EACH YEAR, BY NUMBERS

School Year Beginning in September	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	Totals
Iowa Teachers College. . .	56	55	38	18	7	7	9	190
Iowa Agricultural College	163	84	21	15	18	6	4	311
State University of Iowa. .	319	92	22	13	19	13	5	483
University of Kansas. . . .	258	104	31	13	10	6	1	423
Totals.	796	335	112	59	54	32	19	1,407

Table I shows just when and in which one of the four schools each of the 1,407 graduates of secondary schools in 1908 entered; the number entering each school each year; the total number

entering each school for all years; and the total number entering all schools for each year. It should be read as follows: Of the 190 students entering Iowa State Teachers College after their graduation from secondary schools in the year 1908, 56 entered the following year, 55 entered after an interval of one year, and so on for each of the years and each of the schools. Of the 1,407 who entered the four higher schools during the next seven years after their graduation from secondary schools in 1908, 796 entered on time, 335 entered one year late, and so on for the entrants for each of the remaining years.

TABLE II
SHOWING ENTRANTS IN ALL SCHOOLS, EACH YEAR, IN RATE PER CENT

School Year Beginning in September	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	Totals
Iowa Teachers College. . .	29.47	28.95	20.00	9.47	3.70	3.70	5.70	100
Iowa Agricultural College	52.41	27.00	6.75	4.82	5.80	1.90	1.25	100
University of Iowa.	66.05	19.05	4.55	2.69	3.94	2.69	1.03	100
University of Kansas. . . .	60.99	24.59	7.32	3.07	2.36	1.42	0.24	100
Totals.	56.57	23.81	7.96	4.19	3.84	2.27	1.35	100

Table II shows the same things as does Table I, except that in each case, reading from left to right, the rate per cent is given instead of the actual numbers. Table II must be read from left to right, thus: the total number entering Iowa Teachers College equals 100 per cent, of which 29.47 per cent entered the first year, 28.95 per cent entered one year late, and so on for each of the other years. Proceed in the same way in reading each of the other schools and the grand total.

TABLE III
SHOWING PERCENTAGE OF BELATED ENTRANCE TO
IOWA TEACHERS COLLEGE

71 per cent show a loss in time-articulation of 1 or more years
 43 per cent show a loss in time-articulation of 2 or more years
 23 per cent show a loss in time-articulation of 3 or more years
 14 per cent show a loss in time-articulation of 4 or more years
 10 per cent show a loss in time-articulation of 5 or more years
 6 per cent show a loss in time-articulation of 6 or more years
 ? per cent show a loss in time-articulation of 7 or more years

TABLE IV

SHOWING BELATED ENTRANCE TO IOWA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

48 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 1 or more years
21 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 2 or more years
13 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 3 or more years
8 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 4 or more years
3 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 5 or more years
1 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 6 or more years
7 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 7 or more years

TABLE V

SHOWING BELATED ENTRANCE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

34 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 1 or more years
15 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 2 or more years
10 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 3 or more years
7 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 4 or more years
3 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 5 or more years
1 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 6 or more years
7 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 7 or more years

TABLE VI

SHOWING BELATED ENTRANCE TO KANSAS UNIVERSITY

39 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 1 or more years
15 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 2 or more years
7 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 3 or more years
4 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 4 or more years
2 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 5 or more years
24 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 6 or more years
7 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 7 or more years

TABLE VII

SHOWING BELATED ENTRANCE TO ALL FOUR INSTITUTIONS

43 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 1 or more years
20 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 2 or more years
12 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 3 or more years
8 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 4 or more years
4 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 5 or more years
1 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 6 or more years
7 per cent students show a loss in time-articulation of 7 or more years

Tables III-VII are self-explanatory. In them are presented the facts concerning the interval between graduation from high school and entrance to college as regards the fourteen hundred graduates of secondary schools in the year 1908, who have since entered four state schools in Iowa and Kansas.

SOME DEDUCTIONS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

From the foregoing data and the explanation, the following deductions seem warranted:

1. The college students who entered these four state schools and who had previously graduated from secondary schools in 1908, with certain limitations, may be regarded as typical.
2. Large numbers of students tide over an interval between graduation from high school and entrance to college.
3. There is need of wise counsel and direction of students during their high-school course and during the interval between completion of high school and entrance to college.
4. There must exist in the college-beginning group many individuals who would profit by immediate consultation with an adviser, and this number and the consequent need will increase in proportion as the time-articulation of high school and college approaches a minimum of loss.
5. The age of students upon completion of professional courses is materially greater in cases of retarded entrance to college.
6. The development of individual centers of interest in cases of broken continuity is irregular and unnatural.

Considering the foregoing points we are justified, it seems, in regarding the results as typical of secondary-school graduates who go to college, and in regarding the data from each of the three types of higher schools as typical for institutions of each of the respective types in the North Central states. That is, it seems we should be justified in supposing that of the thousands of students who graduate annually from these secondary schools, and who later enter college, large numbers of them do so only after a lapse of from one to several years of time. Also, it seems we might safely expect that an analysis of the large number of students who compose our Freshman college classes from year to year would show many representatives of each high-school class for several years back. The fact that the two universities differ but 5 per cent in the number of students who show a time loss of one year or more, the fact that the rates in both cases are relatively low, and the fact of the marked difference in comparison with the teachers' school (Table II), support the relation pointed out as existing between retardation

and the type of higher school. The facts that the 1,407 students represent several hundred high schools chosen at random, over a typical section of the North Central states warrants us in taking them as typical of high-school graduates, of this section, who go to college. The question whether the same tendency toward retarded entrance to college exists in the large city, in New England, or other sections, obviously is answerable only by similar data from the respective localities.

The significance for school authorities of the fact that large numbers of secondary graduates postpone their entrance to college is great. It would seem that these facts should be taken into account in the consideration of any school policies or practices (1) which affect the students' ages on completion of the school course; (2) which may make for or against the extension of the existing high-school course; or (3) which have to do with the vocational interests of students.

Certainly it is poor economy to permit an individual who might do expert work as a student to become an inefficient servant in society during an interval of relative immaturity and later, when he might be performing expert service in society to keep him engaged in the work of preparation. No one would deny that he can perform but a relatively low-grade service in society during the years just following high-school graduation. Nor has it yet been demonstrated that he is proportionately more efficient as a student during the later years. The logical conclusion is that during the earlier years the individual can make a success as a student, and that he cannot during this period be much of a success in any vocation which requires higher education as a preparation. If the vocation which the student expects to enter demands a higher education, then his course ought to be continuous to that end and should be so planned that he may complete it at the earliest age possible. Any other mode of procedure is unnatural and is wasteful for both the individual and society.

In view of our facts, it would seem that there are reasons why the secondary course might well be made extensive enough to include all the preparation necessary for entrance upon the work of the professional course. Perhaps the retardation shown by

our study to exist is due largely to the mere fact of the break in continuity of procedure. Extend the secondary-school period one or even two years, and the student will find means of continuing to the end—as he now does. Psychologically we may look upon this tendency to remain out of school for a year or more as a sort of social habit. This habit, like all habits, functions when the proper stimulus is presented, and if we withhold the stimulus (high-school graduation) for a year or two, the resulting action will likewise be delayed. Not only will it be delayed, but there will be a tendency for more perfect time-articulation between high school and college—owing to the stronger pull of the vocational interest which will have been developed in the additional year or two. May we not well take advantage of the proverbial ambitions and aspirations of the “Sophomore”—nature’s provision—in seeking a means of bridging this break between secondary and higher institutions?

From the standpoint of vocational interests, it seems there is only loss to be expected from such a lapse of time. Efficiency in the pursuit of any vocation depends largely upon the individual’s having well-developed centers of interest in his chosen field. Put concretely, this means wide information in the given field, plus certain established habits or characteristic modes of action. Now, when one is engaged in a line of work besides his life-work, the “information” phase of his vocational education must suffer. Or if he become an untrained worker in his chosen field, as he may in the work of teaching, there is the danger of his forming bad “habits of action” which will later make it more difficult for him to acquire the more desirable ones. Vocational guidance during high school and college seems necessary, therefore, to the end that the student may become intelligent as to the demands of his chosen work and as to the necessity of early and continuous effort along right lines.

The need of “contact with the world,” or so-called “real life,” the commonly advanced excuse for a break in the continuity at this stage in the educational process, should be granted recognition only in so far as it is valid as a condemnation of existing high-school and college courses of study and methods of procedure. If this “need-of-contact-with-the-world” feeling is an accompaniment of

ideas based on the nature of the high-school course of study and methods of work, then those are the things in need of attention. Or, if this so-called "real-life" experience is necessary that the student may succeed in the higher school, then perhaps the higher institution is in need of "inspection." In either case, or in both, it seems that when we add to the facts of loss of time and consequent loss of efficient service in society the fact of the very questionable value of such experience as the individual gets during this "world-contact" interval, we may well give, as school administrators, serious thought to the question of vitalizing our courses of study and methods of work. That is, would it not be an economy of effort and of service for both individual and society, if the very interesting and valuable, but simple things which now are the content of many of our higher cultural courses of study were given farther down in the course—where their essential facts are no less appreciated and where there are many times as many to profit by them—and that these mature students be permitted to work on problems which require an interest broader than that of mere personal improvement, and which are worthy of the best effort of serious men?